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Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

VOTE

RCPC to Hold Elections in April

by Zac Unger, RCPC Board Member

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) will be holding its annual Board of Directors election next month. There are six seats up for election. The "Call for Candidates" closed on February 28th, and Candidate Statements will be published in next month's edition of the *Rockridge News*. **The election is scheduled for Thursday, April 18 from 7-9pm and Saturday, April 20 from 1-4pm.** Rockridge residents are encouraged to come out and vote (see Rockridge.org for neighborhood boundaries).

Prior to the election, RCPC will hold an online Candidates' Forum and will post the video to the organization's website at Rockridge.org. Additionally, candidates will submit statements for publication in the *Rockridge News* in which they discuss three important issues they seek to address as board members. The April issue of the *Rockridge News* will include details about election procedures and voting locations.

The RCPC Board has adopted guidelines for candidates to encourage fairness and transparency. Candidates are asked to not seek or promote endorsements by elected officials or outside groups.

RCPC Election, see next page

A Backyard Surprise — Rare Eagle Sightings in Rockridge Hills

by Skip Fogarty



Local photographer Jim Roach recently captured this photo of a rare bald eagle sighting at Lake Temescal.

One of the pleasures of living adjacent to open parklands is the abundant variety of wildlife in our own backyard. Over the years, we've been visited by deer, coyotes, turkeys, raccoons, skunks, hawks, owls, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, and countless other birds. (Don't get me started about all the squirrels.)

But a few weeks ago, a shrill, somewhat startling, bird cry caught my ear. It was obviously nearby, but it was almost dusk, so I strained my eyes to spot the bird if I could. At that moment, swooping out of a stand of neighboring eucalyptus, I saw a majestically sized bird flying straight toward me.

As it passed overhead, I felt a shiver. I thought I'd seen a bald eagle! Were my eyes deceiving me? I scrambled out to the driveway to see if I could get another look. The bird was heading east toward Lake Temescal, just a few hundred yards away. It circled once, then twice, before gliding back over our house to settle in the tall eucalyptus, again. I grabbed the binoculars I keep handy by the back door. Once focused, I was excited to see clearly that it was a "baldy," as birders refer to them. It was thrilling, but what's it doing in Oakland?

With a magnified view, I observed the eagle's head swiveling to scan the surroundings and the ground below. It is said they can spot prey from a mile away. Then suddenly a screaming murder of crows came into view, proceeding to harass and dive bomb the

Temescal Eagle, see next page

Temescal Eagle, from front page

solitary eagle. It did not seem the least bit concerned and took a few nonchalant swipes with its beak if the crows got too close.

As I spread word of my sighting, I found neighbors who confirmed seeing an eagle by the lake. A couple of folks had fuzzy cell phone pictures to share. That prompted me to reach out to avian photographer extraordinaire, **Jim Roach**. He is somewhat of a celebrity on Nextdoor for posting gorgeous shots of all the birds to be found in our parks and along the bay shore. Had he seen the great bird?

"Yep, they're around," he confirmed. He'd spotted one last year at Temescal. Later, he spied a pair fishing at the lake, and another time he saw one adult and two juveniles there.

"Baldies made a nice comeback from the brink about 40, 50 years ago," Jim informed me. "They are not at all uncommon in the Delta and Sacramento River Valley. There was a nesting pair on the golf course in Alameda and other sightings around East Bay lakes like Del Valle and Chabot." He explained they prefer to hunt for fish, but small animals, snakes and other birds are also on the menu. "The ducks and pelicans pretty much moved out once the eagle showed up," he said.

The bald eagle, our national symbol, was nearly extinct in the lower 48 states by the early 1960s. Pesticides like DDT, lead poisoning and hunting (believe it or not) were major culprits in its catastrophic decline. In a 1963 count, there were only about 400 nesting pairs. One of the first creatures protected by the Endangered Species Act, bald eagles now number upwards of 300,000 individuals and 70,000 nesting pairs in the continental U.S.

In the gathering darkness, I watched the glorious raptor rise from its perch and fly westward toward the Bay. When it was gone, I returned my binoculars to the shelf and wondered what our next backyard surprise might be. ■

RCPC Election, from previous page

Campaign materials should clearly state they were not written, produced, or published by RCPC Board members, and should indicate that they come from one or more candidates (with their approval) or identify the author/s by name, with a mailing address and/or website. Finally, if campaign material recommends a "slate" of candidates, all those listed on the slate must have agreed to be included.

The RCPC Board expects that eligible candidates will avoid making personal attacks or false or misleading statements about themselves or others.

For more information, contact RCPC at election@rockridge.org and visit www.Rockridge.org. ■

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THE RockridgeNews

The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by **Don Kinkead** and is published monthly (except August). It is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement; and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

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Contacting the *Rockidge News*

Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in the *Rockridge News*? Have questions about newsletter distribution? Want to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain? We'd love to hear from you.

Want to write a letter to the Editor? Lletters are limited to 450 words and are published at the editors discretion. Send letters to: editor@rockridge.org. Please be sure to include your name, email address, city and street of residence. **All submissions accepted for publication are subject to editing for clarity and brevity.**

The Rockridge News reserves the right to refuse any articles, letters, or advertisements.

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To subscribe to *The Rockridge News*, send your check for $20, payable to *RCPC* with "Rockridge News" noted on the memo line.

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Display Ad Deadline for APRIL 2024: March 21st, 2024

Advertising rates are $28/column inch ($32 for color). Six-month pre-pay rates available.
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Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, *its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.*

RCPC Responds to Release of CCA's Draft Environmental Impact Report

by Ken Rich, RCPC Land Use Chair

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) recently sent the letter below regarding the proposed "CCA Project" at 5212 Broadway to both the Oakland Planning Commission and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on the occasion of hearings regarding the project in front of both those bodies.

For those readers not familiar with this project, it is a proposal to construct new rental apartments on the former California College of the Arts (CCA) campus on Broadway at College Avenue. This project has been long discussed and debated in our community. After a longer-than-usual City approval process, the project is slated for final approval later this year, and recently underwent hearings on its environmental impact report.

The board is pleased with the proposal, but we understand that it may not be perfect from the perspective of many in the community. Some believe it should provide more than the included ten percent affordable units. Others think it is too dense. Some are unhappy that the project will displace several existing buildings on the CCA campus, while others think the project design made too many compromises in the name of historic preservation.

No development proposal of this size is likely to please everyone. But the RCPC Board voted to support this project because it believes in the urgency of providing new housing both statewide and in Oakland and because it believes that Rockridge, as a "high resource" neighborhood, with access to good schools and services and proximity to excellent public transit, has a moral obligation to do its part in addressing the housing crisis. All board members would prefer that the project include more than ten percent affordable housing, but we understand that requiring more would almost certainly render the project financially infeasible and it would never be built.

We look forward to seeing 448 new apartments at the CCA site. We also hope for the day when we can see at least that many more homes built on the vacant lot at the Ridge (Broadway and Pleasant Valley) as well as at a few other opportunity sites scattered around Rockridge. ■

LETTER FROM RCPC TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND PLANNING COMMISSION

Rockridge

February 4, 2024

City of Oakland Planning Commission
[By email]

Re: 5212 Broadway - California College of the Arts Project: RCPC Letter of Support

Dear Planning Commission Members:

As you consider the adequacy of the Environmental impact report for the 5212 Broadway – California College of the Arts project, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) wants to make clear that it is in support of this critical project providing 448 units of desperately needed housing for Oakland.

This project will provide not only 448 units of new housing, but also a 1.5-acre new public open space located within a 15-minute walk from the Rockridge BART station. RCPC believes that medium density, multi-family housing developments like this one are critical to addressing the housing crisis gripping the Bay Area and California. We further believe that Rockridge, as a high resource neighborhood with predominantly very expensive single-family homes, should do its part to welcome projects like this one on this site and hopefully on other available sites in the future.

This project has taken more than seven years to reach this point in the approval process – and yet is not even now at a final approval stage. There may be many reasons why it has taken so long – ranging from an overly burdensome City administrative process to chronic understaffing of City departments to opposition from some portions of the surrounding neighborhoods. But the City must do better to move housing proposals to approval and construction. If this project had been approved after "only" two or three years, it would likely be built and open by now, providing homes to our children, our neighbors and most importantly, almost 50 moderate income families.

Thank you very much for your attention to this important project.

Very truly yours,

Casey Farmer
Board Chair

Kenneth Rich
Ken Rich
Land Use Committee Chair

CC: RCPC Board members

Land Use Committee Meeting

The Rockridge community is encouraged to participate in LUC meetings where elements of the General Plan Update will be a primary topic of conversation.

Meetings are held at 7:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

The next meeting will be held on March 20, on Zoom

To participate, or to request links to this or any previous meeting, email landuse@rockridge.org.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Connecting the Dots

DEAR EDITOR: I'm concerned there's a failure to connect the dots regarding crime. Eddie's Liquors was literally hit four times in two months, with a *KTVU News* story quoting a co-owner about how the Oakland Police Department (OPD) encountered the thieves the very first time, but let them drive away per OPD's policy of non-pursuit for property crimes. However, the story offered nothing to address this policy, or its implications.

Another time, it seemingly slipped out that because OPD had been accused of racism in their enforcement of vehicle equipment violations, administration decided to categorically direct officers not to enforce them — meaning no penalties for the likes of blackout windows, obscuring license plate covers, or missing plates.

However, the establishment of such policies seems to live behind some veil of public relations further screened by a perennial sun-will-come-out-tomorrow façade put forth by OPD brass at public meetings. I wonder how many other policies OPD has that differ from standard policing, and in such needlessly blunt fashion.

I do know that when I saw a masked driver going down a street collecting items (not recycling) from unknown depths of people's property in a pickup with no plates, and I tried reporting it, not only did dispatch make it clear OPD was unlikely to respond, predictably, but moreover, when asked specifically if they'd even enforce the law for a missing license plate if encountered, the reply without elaboration was, "It depends." That's not even informative, let alone responsive.

I'm baffled to see no one is connecting the dots between OPD policies and repeating crime, especially the rampant smash and grabs. Physically and intellectually, we need follow-up.

Certainly, insufficient staffing also plays into the dynamic, and behind that, funding and taxation equity; also, a dearth of paths to livable economics due to wealth inequality fosters crime; all in the richest country on earth. We need to be collecting and connecting all these dots, unless we want more of what we're getting.

Eric Neville
Thomas Avenue

(Eric Neville is Treasurer of the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council, but writes here in a personal capacity.) ■





Community Holds Meeting as Crime Continues

by Carol Kasparek

The February Greater Rockridge NCPC at the Rockridge Library focused on crime reports from beat officers and included a presentation by a private security service, 1st Defense. About a dozen people attended in person, and eight people participated via Zoom.

Community Resource Officers, the Crime Reduction Team, and the Violent Crime Operation Center, were able to work together to apprehend two groups of teenager suspects at the end of January. The majority of the juveniles were released to their parents (as is the case with most juvenile apprehensions) with the exception of one who has been detained for prosecution. **Officer Gichki** stated that carjacking and assault reports have been reduced by 90 percent since these apprehensions.

Several attendees described their personal experiences with crime in the area — one had two vehicles stolen within a week; another had their home broken into with extensive losses. **David Shrestha**, owner of Eddie's Liquors, shared that his store had been broken into four times since Thanksgiving. He and others wanted to know what the OPD is doing to follow up on their crime reports.

Mr. Shrestha noted that he has yet to receive a progress report on the break-ins, saying he has heard from neighbors and officers that policies need to be changed. "We have received a lot of support from the community." Neighbors have even donated money to help with repairs… "people tell us they don't need to buy anything, they just want to help."

Especially problematic is the effect of Prop. 47 (thefts of under $950 must be prosecuted as misdemeanors, not as felonies) which limits the tactics law enforcement can use, and on what

NCPC Meeting, see next page

NCPC Meeting, from previous page

types of crimes they can be used. This and other County policies are meant to prevent overly oppressive approaches.

The officers explained that a lack of resources also limits the department's ability to respond to and investigate crimes, asserting that Oakland has twice the number of service calls of San Francisco with half the number of officers, meaning police officers will focus primarily on "the most violent crime areas" in Oakland.

John Sebastian of 1st Defense Patrol, also in attendance, presented a brief overview of the services provided by his private security firm. They offer car patrols, signage, and walking patrols to residents and businesses as another possible solution.

NCPC meeting info can be found online at RockridgeNCPC.com; Officer Gichki can be reached at mgichki@oaklandca.gov. Information on 1st Defense Patrol can be found at https://www.1stdefense.org. ■

Spreading Cookie Love

by Maggie Pickavance



Second Grader and Brownie Girl Scout Pearl Burnham sells cookies outside of Safeway.

It's Girl Scout Cookie Season, and local Girl Scouts will be selling cookies until March 17 to help fund their troop activities and raise the money needed to maintain Girl Scout camp properties and administrative offices. Look for booths in the neighborhood outside of Cole Hardware, Safeway on College Ave, and It's Your Move Games. Find a list of locations, or a Girl Scout to deliver to your home at www.ilovecookies.org. ■

Dogs of Rockridge



Rudy, Mr. Stars & Stripes, is a 7-year-old German Shorthair Pointer rescue who enjoys dressing up for holidays and special occasions, trying to climb trees, and taking long walks in the hood and hills. He looks forward every month to delivering *Rockridge News* with his person. He has never met a human or dog he doesn't love and best of all, he doesn't know how to bark. Rudy was found alone on a corner in Chico, but after being rescued by NorCal GSP Rescue, Rudy found his 'forever' home in Rockridge.



Winky is a McNab mix rescue dog, and has lived in Rockridge for the last six years. She loves sniffing the neighborhood and taking hikes in the nearby hills. When at home, Winky prefers to spend her time sleeping in her bed or basking in the sun. She's a big sister to two kids who have taken up most of the family's attention lately, but we love Winky's patient eyes, gentle snout nudges, and indefatigable patience with young hands. When she's looking for a bit of affection, she'll raise her paw for a rub. We don't know Winky's exact age, but she's turning at least 16 on March 14.

Does your furry friend live in Rockridge? If so, send a photo of your four-legged companion with a short commentary to: editor@rockridge.org.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Activate the Vacant CCA Site with Housing

DEAR EDITOR: After seven years of community engagement, the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed housing project at the former California College of the Arts (CCA) site has been released. The project has evolved significantly over these seven years in response to Rockridge community feedback. Long gone is the tower. The articulated buildings proposed in its place provide a contextual neighbor that will celebrate the site's history while activating the abandoned large site that anchors Rockridge.

The project will offer 1.5 acres of park space, open to our community, that will feature a large lawn and a meandering landscape through redwood groves, heritage oaks, mature species and historic art installations. In addition to preserving and repurposing the primary elements of the Victorian Era estate (including the entire length of the Broadway Wall and the Broadway Stairs), the redeveloped site will include public event space, community meeting space, a public view terrace and a nature playground.

There will also be 448 transit-oriented homes, just a 10-minute walk from the Rockridge BART station. Forty-five of the homes will be affordable for people with moderate incomes. Not only will the development at CCA provide significant amenities that will benefit us all, but it will bolster the vitality of the College Avenue corridor and help maintain the local business character that we all love.

Despite our wealth of resources (transit, retail, historic architecture), Rockridge has produced a dearth of housing over the past several decades. It's time to do our share, and the CCA redevelopment is our chance. As a 20-year resident of Rockridge who is raising my kids here, I encourage you to join me in supporting this commendable project by emailing info@5212broadway.com to request that your name be included on the list of community supporters that the project team is assembling. ■

Kristen Belt
61st Street





Have Storage Space for Tool Lenders?

by Jack Soares



About twice the size of of this pickup is what is needed to store the nonprofit's donated tools.

A tiny Oakland-based nonprofit has launched a critical space program. A mission to Mars or a satellite launch? Nope. The "space program" that the Friends of the Oakland Tool Lending Library's (FOTLL) is devoting its energy to is entirely earthbound — its small group of volunteers is asking the community for help in finding more storage space.

As a result of its successful, free DIY workshops, the Junior Carpenters' Club, the every-first-and-third-Saturday-of-the-month tool sales (when the weather is good), and its world famous $5 t-shirts, the organization finds itself with space-related, behind-the-scenes challenges.

"Years ago, one of the FOTLL volunteers held tool sales when the mood struck him," says **Ty Yurgelevic**, founding staff member of the Oakland Public Library's Tool Lending Library and, since his retirement, an active member of the Friends group. "Between tool sales, the donated tools were stuffed in a corner of the Tool Library's cramped basement office.

"Five or six years ago, things changed," added Yurgelevic. The tool sale was put on a twice-a-month schedule with promotion on social media. Word-of-mouth referrals were successful in increasing the number of buyers as well as donors. The shelves in the Tool Library's office overflowed into the garages and workshops of FOTLL's small group of volunteers.

Tool Lenders, see next page

Tool Lenders, from previous page

Those spaces were quickly overwhelmed. The popularity of the Junior Carpenters' Club added bins full of parts, paint, and other supplies.

Each of its successful programs added exponentially to storage space needs. "Our t-shirts are a good example," says **Celena Peet**, FOTLL volunteer and designer of the Tool Library logo that graces the shirts and the forthcoming Oakland Tooligans logo. "We silkscreened the shirts ourselves and sold them as a fundraising project," she explained. "We made them in small batches in multiple colors and styles. At $18 each, they weren't a hot item. Then we decided on a single color — still in sizes from toddler to adult 3XL — and to sell them for $5 as promotional items. Sales took off. The nine dozen shirts we'll do in our next screening session will replace inventory sold last year."

In 2023, FOTLL rented a six-foot by six-foot storage unit, but the monthly charge exceeds the estimated cost for a Junior Carpenters' Club workshop for 24 kids. "We need to find a space in the neighborhood that is clean, dry, secure, easily accessible — and ideally, free," says Yurgelevic.

To help FOTLL find space, volunteer, or to donate tools, email Friends ofTheOaklandTLL@gmail.com. ■

Bid and Win at Peralta Elementary Auction

by Kathleen Roberts

Looking to make a difference in your local community and get something back in return? Look no further. **Peralta Elementary School's** annual auction goes live on **Monday, March 11**, featuring donations from favorite small businesses across the neighborhood and beyond with items from Boichik Bagels, Bird & Bean, Wisteria, Re-Up Refills, Redfield Cider, GoldenBug, and Blick Art Materials (just to name a few), plus tickets to a show at the Fox, and even a stay at the Claremont Hotel.

Use the QR code on right to check out the amazing items and place your bids to win — all while supporting your elementary school.

Online bidding (https://givebutter.com/c/Peralta2024/auction) is open to all until 8:30pm on March 23, ending with a live in-person auction event that same day, from 6pm to 9pm at Groundfloor Club, 4055 Telegraph. ■

Let's Get Bidding!

by Tiffany Chan

The Spring Auction is **Claremont Middle School** PTA's biggest annual fundraiser and features hundreds of items available to bid on donated by local and national businesses, including several generous donations from Rockridge business owners. The online auction is open to everyone, and gift certificates can easily be mailed or emailed to the winning bidders. To bid online (3/29-4/11) please visit the auction homepage at https://claremontms.schoolauction.net/spring2024.

Tickets are also available for Claremont's 90s Throwback Party to be held on Saturday, April 13, 7pm to 10pm, at Rockridge Masonic Hall, (see website above). All are welcome. ■





Designer Fits into Expanding Avenue Fashion Scene

eyes on Rockridge

by Judith Doner Berne

Taylor Jay counts San Francisco **Mayor London Breed** and actor/social media personality **Tabitha Brown** among her customers as she prepares to celebrate the one-year anniversary of her Rockridge boutique at 5550 College Avenue.

Taylor, as she likes to be called, opened the Taylor Jay Collection last April, the latest of three designer-owned women's apparel shops along College Avenue. She's next door to **Devon Gregory** and a couple of blocks south of **Lesley Evers**. Several other stores carrying a variety of fashion choices for women are her neighbors.



In fact, "Lesley did all this," Taylor said. "We're friends. She's the reason I have the store." It was Evers who urged her to open a second Oakland location, to go along with her shop at 2355 Broadway, and helped her find the storefront.

"Taylor and I first crossed paths in a sewing factory nearly 10 years ago, a meeting that marked the beginning of a friendship and professional camaraderie," Evers, a Rockridge resident, said. "Our journey has continued beyond work, as we both attend church at The Father's House Oakland, a community which has played a pivotal role in both of our lives and strengthened our friendship.

"In 2023, inspired by my own experiences in Rockridge, I encouraged Taylor to expand her business with a new shop on College Avenue," Evers said. "Her modern, comfortable, and beautifully crafted fashion line is a perfect fit for the neighborhood, mirroring its sophisticated yet inviting charm."

Taylor was born in San Francisco, but has lived in different parts of the Bay Area during what she described as "a chaotic childhood." Growing up in a broken home, she was raped by a non-blood relative when she was 14. "I'm a survivor," she said.

She chose to give birth and raise her daughter **Brenda Sheree**, now 30, pretty much on her own. Indeed, if you stop by the shop that's who's most likely to be your salesperson. "I love working here," Sheree said. "The clothing meets every person where they are. Mom, being the designer, makes it extra special. I love the meaning behind it."

At one point in her life, Taylor said, she went from a size two to a size 12. "I didn't know how to dress for my body anymore." So, helping women feel safe and good about themselves are important aspects of her design philosophy, as are the materials she uses. Taylor relies on primary colors and sustainable fabrics, such as cottons, Tencels, modals, linens, and bamboo. "We study and design unique features that are easy to convert for any use and style: business, formal, casual, fitness, elegant, sexy, bohemian… the possibilities are endless. They feel so good to the touch.

"I don't draw and sketch," she said. "I drape. Then I build from my foundation pieces." All her pieces are manufactured right here in Oakland, in her own factory. "We do custom sizing and alterations. We're so community-based," she said. "I have learned from people, from reading, and from doing. Being a Black woman I'm able to relate to so many

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page



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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

roadblocks we've experienced."

Her clientele is diverse, Taylor said. "We attract more of a character type rather than by any particular race. Over 10 years of designing, we've had fewer than 20 returns. They become committed to our brand. I've always been expressive with my clothing. The aesthetic is comfort, versatility, timeless colors. These are pieces you can pass on to your daughters."

Her path to becoming a clothing designer was roundabout. She moved to Los Angeles, where she earned her GED from high school as an adult, and briefly attended the California Design College. But she took courses in merchandising and marketing — not design.

She parlayed that new-found knowledge by opening Taylor's Joint, a Los Angeles boutique (now closed) that featured independent designers. Returning to the Bay Area, she began designing on her own, launching an online website and opening a shop in the Laurel District. Then, in the early stages of the pandemic, she moved to the Broadway site. She also hosts pop-ups, and has done some as recently as last month in Chicago and Dallas.

When the pandemic hit, it was that online business and mask-making which kept her afloat. Knowing that the mask-making would be short-lived, she photographed past customers in her designs outside their homes, hoping to convince mask buyers to buy her clothing. She closed, and then re-opened the Broadway shop, sharing it at times with another retailer.

As she told *Forbes* magazine in a 2021 article, "Focusing on the customers and their need to be comfortable during an uncomfortable time went beyond the clothing. We turned our (Broadway) brick and mortar into a fulfillment center, and then created a window pick-up system so they could safely pick up their online orders and shop via our window display. It was a way to come out of the house, do some shopping, but remain safe."

Taylor is a long-time supporter of Sol Sisters, an Oakland-based non-profit dedicated to helping women overcome societal barriers by providing educational and empowering experiences that promote community. She adds her voice to business development panels and workshops to help other Black women find their path, and supports the agency through donations and partnerships.



"Mom being the designer makes it extra special," said daughter Brenda Sheree (left) who loves selling Taylor Jay's fashions.

Photo by Judy Berne

"Taylor truly exemplifies women's empowerment," said Sol Sisters Founder and Executive Director **Christine Coleman**, PhD, LMFT. "She has displayed a genuine dedication to serving with Sol Sisters through volunteerism at various community events, in-kind donations to provide high quality clothing to under-resourced women, and participation in our programs and events."

Both Taylor and her daughter are excited to be part of the Rockridge scene. "I'm a sucker for Market Hall," Taylor said. "I love Acre, and the Ramen Shop, and Ben 'N Nicks for fries and wings." She is also excited to be engaged (it happened over Christmas) with a summer wedding planned.

Have a local story that needs telling? Email judyberne@att.net. ■

Courtside Tennis and Pickleball Opens on College Avenue

by Anna L. Marks

As pickleball gains in popularity, Rockridge folks won't be left out — a new store for enthusiasts just opened at 6012 College. Courtside Tennis and Pickleball owners **Jennifer Kniesel** and her husband, **Will**, already have two locations in the Sacramento area and are excited to bring the fun to Rockridge.

In 2008, at the young age of 18, Will took a job at Courtside Tennis in Sacramento, and soon after purchased two stores from the owner who was looking to sell at the time. It's now a family-run business with the couple working together full time.

Jennifer wants people to know that those employed at Courtside Tennis and Pickleball are all tennis and pickleball experts who can assist customers with "the largest selection of tennis and pickleball gear as well as the largest Demo Program of every tennis and pickleball retail store in California. Through the years we have met thousands of people who have become loyal customers and friends."



Will and Jennifer, and their two dogs Sasha and Sabrina, relax courtside.

Want to try before you buy? For a sign-up fee of $25, players gain access to their Demo Program for 30 days. This includes three racquets or paddles at one time to play with that can be swapped out as much as wanted during the time period. If you decide to buy a paddle or racquet, the $25 is applied to sale price. With hundreds of pickleball paddles and tennis racquets to choose from, this may be a good option, especially for beginners.

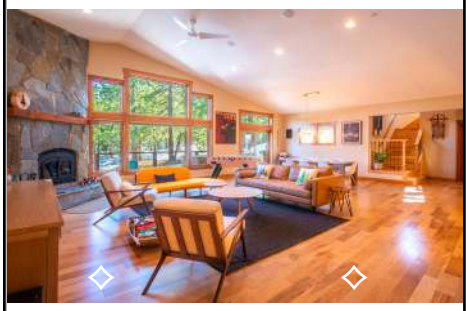
Despite the commute from their home in Roseville, the couple have been looking forward to expanding to Oakland and plan to bring the full experience. "The East Bay has had a lack of tennis stores with a large selection for their community — we are excited to bring this to the community of Rockridge," says Jennifer.

Store hours are Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 5pm. Learn more at www.CourtsideTennis.com. ■

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Market talk: Loan rates (long term) are still in high 6s due to positive economic news on jobs and spending. Average credit balances are higher and savings lower. Fed officials indicated they may lower Fed Funds Rate (short term) 3 times this year *"IF"* inflation holds near its ~2% level. Home inventory and buyer activity are rising, leading to balance. Data shows that highest prices over the last 5 years occurred seasonally in the spring.

Coming: Gorgeous 2200+sf 5978Margarido.com Rockridge 3+BD 3BA stunning view home - seek $2.1M
For Sale: 4 contiguous view lots in Piedmont Pines, great for 4 homes or a dream estate - $ 995,000
Sold: 3+ Bed 2 Bath ~1900sf restoration project off Piedmont Ave Neighborhood - $815,000 multiple offers
Prepping: Glen Highlands 4+ Bed 3+ Ba 3300+SqFt beauty across Hwy 13 from Upper Rockridge - ask $2.1M

March is Awareness Month for: Women's History, Reading, Disabilities, M.S., Athletic Training, Asset Management, Social Work, Noodles, Crafts, Nutrition

HAPPY SPRING!



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COMPASS

on College Avenue

Yimm is Yummy

by Susie Wyshak

From its opening as sister restaurant to Berkeley's Imm Thai Street Food, Yimm Thai became one of the most popular, buzzy fast-casual restaurants in Rockridge. It was billed as "the food that Thai chefs eat at home."

Even during the pandemic, when no one was eating out, Yimm's well-organized take-out operation and small patio brought in Thai-craving locals. A long table invites large dinner parties to the center of the restaurant with many two- and four-person tables lining the walls.

Start with the Crispy Rolls. Finger-thin, short, deep-fried rolls are filled with carrots, cabbage and crunchy Wood Ear mushrooms. Douse with the sweet and spicy dipping sauce. The fresh rolls make for a more wholesome starter, with fresh vegetables in a rice wrapper and a peanut sauce.

Pad See Ew with fried, wide-cut fresh rice noodles heaped with extra vegetables had been a staple through the pandemic and beyond. Could anything be better? A staffer from Chiang Mai suggested Lord Noodles, naming it his favorite. Mushrooms, green onions, dried squid, tofu and cilantro surrounding a heaping pile of thinner-than-capellini vermicelli noodles, all bathed in a tangy pork broth. He was right.

Avocado Green Curry is a Yimm signature dish, adding a creamy accent to already-creamy green curry. Luckily, one day a friend ordered Yellow Curry. It was a revelation — thick and sweet, with coconut and turmeric steeped into the spicy dish, while potatoes and carrots enhance the overall texture and flavor. It may be the ultimate Thai comfort food. Pair with an Alameda-brewed Almanac Love Hazy IPA. Leftover sauce makes a perfect leftover curry at home.

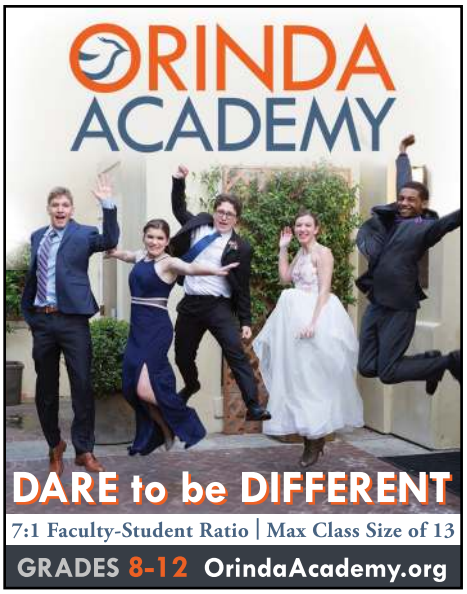
Green Beans, served with a diner's choice of protein and type of rice, feature a spicy garlicky sauce and a generous serving of string beans.

For the complete menu or more backstory on Yimm Thai, visit https://www.yimmoakland.com. ■



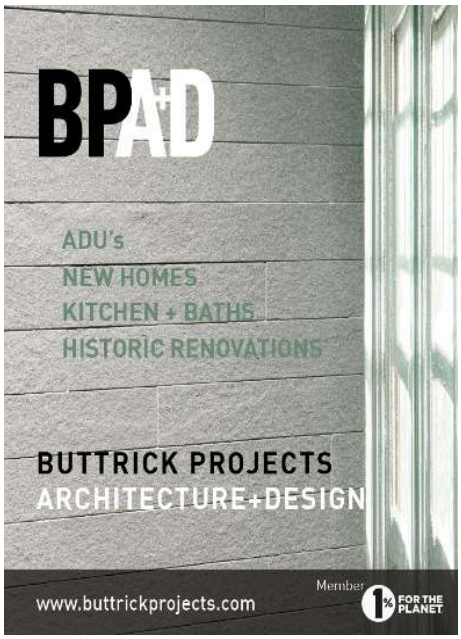












Update on East Bay JCC Site Planning

by Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board Member

For the last year and a half, representatives of the Jewish Community Center of the East Bay (JCC) have periodically held joint meetings with representatives of RCPC and neighbors most immediately impacted by developments on the Dreyer's site at College Avenue and Chabot Road. The JCC began occupying the site three years ago. It will not take full possession of the site until the end of 2024 and plans to start renovation construction in January 2025.

There is now pending before the Oakland Planning Department a preliminary application for conditional use permits and a request for determination regarding the level of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review required. With respect to CEQA compliance, the JCC is seeking a categorical exemption. Traffic and noise consultant reports are being conducted. The proposed project may come up for public review at the Oakland Planning Commission early this summer.

The JCC has long had a North Berkeley campus with a range of programmatic activities that will be maintained. The uses on the Dreyer's site are intended to facilitate additional programmatic activities and to provide office space for the JCC and other nonprofit Jewish organizations. Presently, there are nine Jewish organizations in buildings not still being used by employees of Nestle, the international corporation which owns Dreyer's. The primary JCC use now is for administrative offices. Current non-office activities at the Dreyer's location include a weekly Mahjong group, occasional limited-attendance meetings, two small transitional residential programs for young adults, and tours of the exterior elements of the site with donors.

The JCC intends to maintain the commercial retail stores on College Avenue. After renovations, the anticipation is that 15-20 Jewish nonprofit organizations will have office space onsite, with some providing social and educational services, including a pre-school for up to 120 kids. There also will be a summer camp; family engagement activities; health and wellness activities and adult education classes; indoor gathering space for community celebrations, holidays, and refuge during emergencies; outdoor gathering space for work, meeting, and recreation (but not for sports like swimming or soccer); artist studio space and maker's space; and a small café to serve the internal campus.

The Dreyer's site physically is a mishmash of buildings, including the large office building with retail space on College Avenue, the former Yoshi's restaurant and jazz club, and several individual houses and small multi-unit apartment buildings. Some of the residential buildings were converted legally to office use by Nestle, but others may not have been. However, as part of the City of Oakland's action last October to amend the General Plan and enact implementing zoning amendments, and unbeknownst then to the JCC and RCPC, the entire Dreyer's site was rezoned to CN-1 (Neighborhood Commercial, favoring pedestrian comparison shopping).

JCC Update, see next page





JCC Update, from previous page

Housing, office, and assembly uses are allowable within this zoning classification as permissible, conditional, or grandfathered.

Major proposed renovations are the establishment of a main ground floor entrance to the College Avenue office building from the parking lot off Chabot Road; the re-landscaping of the area between the Chabot Road and Claremont Avenue parking lots, primarily as outside space for kids' programs; and the demolition of an auxiliary building connected to the former Yoshi's space. To create the new entrance, the exterior staircase to the second floor of the office building will be demolished.

The Chabot parking lot will continue to have reserved parking spaces for College Avenue retail stores and will be used for drop-offs and pickups for pre-school and camp programs, while the Claremont parking lot will be set aside for staff parking during business hours. The former Yoshi's space will be used for religious holiday and other assembly events for up to 250 people.

Possible traffic mitigation measures discussed so far have included limiting entering and exiting the Chabot parking lot only from College Avenue and using the Claremont parking lot as the main parking lot for larger events held after business hours and on weekends and holidays. ■

March Events at the Rockridge Library

On March 20, Dr. Noah Whiteman discusses his book *Most Delicious Poison: The Story of Nature's Toxins — from Spices to Vices*

A deadly secret lurks within our spice racks, medicine cabinets, backyard gardens, and private stashes. Scratch beneath the surface of a coffee bean, a red pepper flake, a poppy seed, a mold spore, a foxglove leaf, a magic-mushroom cap, a marijuana bud, or an apple seed, and we find a bevy of strange chemicals. We use these to greet our days (caffeine), titillate our tongues (capsaicin), recover from surgery (opioids), cure infections (penicillin), mend our hearts (digoxin), bend our minds (psilocybin), calm our nerves (CBD), and even kill our enemies (cyanide).

But why do plants and fungi produce such chemicals? And how did we come to use and abuse some of them? Based on cutting-edge science in the fields of evolution, chemistry, and neuroscience, *Most Delicious Poison* reveals: the origins of toxins produced by plants, mushrooms, microbes, and even some animals; the mechanisms that animals evolved to overcome them; how a co-evolutionary arms race made its way into the human experience; and more

This perpetual chemical war not only drove the diversification of life on Earth, but is intimately tied to our own successes and failures. You will never look at a houseplant, mushroom, fruit, or even the past 500 years of human history the same way again. ■

For Children

Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30am.

Chess Club: Wednesdays at 4pm. All ages and skill-levels welcome.

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm. Scout & Coco alternate weeks. They are trained to listen to young people practice reading aloud.

Intergenerational Origami: Does not meet in March. See you in April on Tuesday 4/2 at 4pm.

For Teens

Family Feud & Snacks: Wednesday, 3/13; 2-3pm. Prizes include money and a new car! Hosted by the Teen Advisory Board with the support of the Friends of the Rockridge Library.

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 3/13; 3:30-4:30pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning, and implementing programs and services you want to see at your local library. Every 2nd Wednesday in the TeenZone. New members welcome.

For Adults

Rockridge Book Club: every 2nd Saturday, 3:30-4:30pm. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. March's book is State of Wonder by Ann Patchett.

Meet the Authors



Wednesday, 3/20, 6:30–7:30pm. **Dr. Noah Whiteman**, Professor of Genetics, Genomics, Evolution and Development and Director of the Essig Museum of Entomology at UC Berkeley, will discuss his book, *Most Delicious Poison: The Story of Nature's Toxins — from Spices to Vices*. (See adjacent article)

5366 College Avenue at Manila
510-597-5017

Hours: Mon, Thurs, Sat 10am to 5:30pm
Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 8pm
Closed on Sundays.

Note: The library will be closed Monday, April 1, in observance of Cesar Chavez Day.

www.oaklandlibrary.org/events.



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Two *Rockridge News* Volunteer Opportunities Still Available

by Susan Montauk, RCPC Distribution Manager

We need to thank all of those who have helped deliver the *Rockridge News* door-to-door, some of you for decades now. Naturally, with 150 volunteers, some drop out nearly every month — some are no longer up to the task and others move out of the area — but Rockridge has shown its neighborliness time and again when neighbors step up for other neighbors to lighten their load. We usually get new volunteers the same month we post an opening, but that has not happened yet for the routes below. We hope to get new volunteers this month so deliveries can continue.

The first route is for a District Captain to replace **Toni Ellis** who had this route for decades. This job requires deliveries of bundles to four Block Captains in the Chabot Road area. The other is for a Block Captain on the 400 block of 60th Street to replace **Dorothy Owens**. If we can't get a volunteer for those two routes, we may have to drop them.

- **District Captain for Routes 02A, 02B, 02C, 02D — One drop each on Manor Crest, Chabolyn, Chabot Crest, Roanoke**

- **Route 25A12: Delivers to 22 houses. 400-436 60th Street, one block, from Colby to Howell**

District Captains deliver bundles to Block Captains. Their boxes of bundles are delivered to their front porches by Marshals the first weekend of each month, except August, and we ask that they deliver the bundles to their Block Captains soon after receipt. Block captains deliver house-to-house on their route.

For more details, or to volunteer, please call 510/547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com. ■

The Greater Rockridge NCPC meets on the 2nd Thursday of even numbered months.

The next meeting will be held on:
April 11, at 7pm,
Rockridge Library Conference Room

There will be brief presentations by the Community Resource Officers and discussion of crime and safety issues.

For details, visit
www.rockridgencpc.com

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Rockridge Market is Holding Steady

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
2/7/2022	3	2	5340 Broadway Ter	$948,888	$898,888	79	$900,000
2/14/2022	4	3	457 59th St	$1,895,000	$1,895,000	14	$2,125,000

Homes sold in February closed 6% over the asking price on average.

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RN Classifieds

List your 36-word message here for only $22 (phone number counts as one word). Make check payable to RCPC, and write "Rockridge News Classifieds" in the memo line. **The deadline for April is March 21, 2024** (available April 5). Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131. For more information, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

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PIANO: Free to a Good home
Good condition Steinway medium grand "DuoArt Pianola," that is no longer being used. Probably from 1920s. Located in Rockridge. Text or call 415/518-1611 or email galisoncolgan@gmail.com. Recipient must engage movers. Melissa Parker,Notary.Public-2347156

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